

YEAR OF RENZIED BASEBALL CLOSED

Happenings of 1908 on Diamond Will Live Forever in Game's History.

POLITICS ECLIPSED BY NATIONAL SPORT

Presidential Campaign Aroused Interest Only After Pennant Races Were Over—Finishes Which Aroused Country's Fans to Highest Pitch of Excitement.

The thirty-third year of organized baseball will be remembered by American citizens of 1908 as long as they live, and will stand out vividly in the game's history as long as it is read.

The diamond year, which ended with that week, was remarkable not so much for any single or series of record-breaking performances by individuals or teams as for the sensational campaigns for championships waged not only in both National and American Leagues, but in many of the minor leagues as well. In fact, none of the important performances of record in other years was wiped out in 1908.

In a general way everything in the line of records was broken by the two major leagues alone. For the first time in its history the United States was treated to the phenomenal spectacle of a national campaign for the championship of the highest officials waiting patiently until a couple of campaigns for strips of bunting worth intrinsically \$40 apiece were finished before the citizens would take unusual interest in politics. This extraordinary situation was a matter of comment from coast to coast, could be brought about only by extraordinary circumstances, and that is a feeble adjective to apply to the baseball campaigns of 1908.

Closest Finishes in History.

Nothing like the interest created by the finish lights in the National and American Leagues has been recorded in previous years. No National League team overcame a more brilliant manner than did Chicago's Cubs, who were compelled to stake everything on the result of a single game twice within the space of five days—once when they met and defeated Pittsburgh in their third to fifth game of the season, and again when they were thrashed across a thousand miles and triumphed over New York in the famous battle of October 3rd, risking lives at the hands of a frenzied hostile mob, which had been led to believe the Giants were being robbed of the pennant.

No American League team ever lost a pennant more brilliantly than did Chicago's White Sox, who were edged out of the race absolutely five days before the season closed in the West, yet fought so gamely that they met Detroit on the last day of their schedule with an even chance to win the championship, and were victors in a way that broke more hearts than their own.

The campaigns in both major leagues were so close that it was impossible to pick even a probable winner out of the two. The White Sox were edged out of the race absolutely five days before the season closed in the West, yet fought so gamely that they met Detroit on the last day of their schedule with an even chance to win the championship, and were victors in a way that broke more hearts than their own.

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Four Clubs in American Race. Chicago's White Sox and New York's Giants were the only two teams that were in contention for the pennant until the very end of the season. The White Sox were edged out of the race absolutely five days before the season closed in the West, yet fought so gamely that they met Detroit on the last day of their schedule with an even chance to win the championship, and were victors in a way that broke more hearts than their own.

By repeating their easy victory over Detroit in the final game of the season, the White Sox made it impossible for any other team to win the pennant. The White Sox were edged out of the race absolutely five days before the season closed in the West, yet fought so gamely that they met Detroit on the last day of their schedule with an even chance to win the championship, and were victors in a way that broke more hearts than their own.

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Champions in Sports, 1908

Amateur Athletics: J. Bordemus Archery; George Robertson Billiards (profes.); Geo. Sutton Bowling; A. Wenger Boxing (middleweight); S. Ketchell Boxing (lightweight); Battling Nelson Boxing (featherweight); Abe Attell Boxing (bantamweight); Conlon Chess; Emanuel Lasker Plying; J. J. Held Golf (amateur); J. D. Travers Golf (woman); Miss K. C. Harney Golf (woman); Joe. Notter Hockey; Fred. Huxley Motor-cycle; Thomas Houston Race; J. J. Gould Roller skating; Ollie Moore Roque; E. J. Clark Shooting (rifle); Sergeant A. Brest Shooting (trap); Fred Harlow Shooting (revolver); L. S. Skat; W. A. Larned Skating (professional); Morris Wood Skating (amateur); D. Lamy Swimming; M. J. Connel Tennis (women); Mrs. Banger Wallace Tennis (women); Frank Gotch Wrestling.

The result was the sensational climax, which is so fresh in memory. The American League's campaign was even closer than that in the older league, because there were four contenders instead of three, and because four different clubs were acknowledged to be probable champions before the finish. More remarkable was the illustration of a familiar biblical text. The team which finished last, and a bad last, was not only first at one time, but actually conceded a runaway victory to the team which was first at the wire was last in the early weeks of the struggle.

The New York Highlanders gained so long a lead and held it so consistently during the season that the joy of patrons admitted Griffith had secured a pennant-winner at last. Then came a slump, which carried the team from first to last place in record-breaking time, and resulted in the White Sox winning out so far in front with the help of thirteen straight victories that Jones's men were heralded as probable champions, and Chicago's campaign was beginning to look like another of the many failures of the great clubs, as the Cubs at that time looked equally sure of winning out.

As quickly as they went up, however, the White Sox fell back again, and for several weeks in the latter part of the season they were the hottest kind of a scramble with four clubs mixed up in it. Detroit emerged from this bout and established such a lead all through August and September that it seemed but their competitors thought they could be overtaken. Just before the end of September Cleveland came with a magnificent spurt and gave every promise of holding on to the lead. The Naps stubbed their toes in front of their hoodoo team, Washington, and came back into the thick of the fight that ever marked the close of an American League pennant scramble, and there have been some scrabbles in that lusty young organization.

World's Series an Anti-Climax. With these two gruelling races finished, the world's series proved an anti-climax, particularly in that it brought together Cubs and Tigers, who had met the year before in the most one-sided series ever played for the highest honors. The verdict of the year before was repeated in every particular, the White Sox being victors in five games, instead of having to be content with one drawn game in five as in the previous season.

Only in the matter of shutout games was the National League's 1908 campaign particularly remarkable. There were 163 whiteshows inflicted by National League pitchers last season, which topped the best previous record in that particular by nine games. Thirty-nine of these blanks were won by the White Sox, who were victors in one extra-inning contests, of which the longest went seventeen innings, there being three battles of those dimensions.

Two games were played in which a pitcher did not throw his opponent a hit. Witte, of the Giants, performed this feat against Philadelphia, and made a new mark by doing it in a ten-inning battle. He would have beaten "Cy" Young's world's record of not letting a man reach first base on a base on balls issued in the ninth inning. Rucker, of Brooklyn, was the other no-hit pitcher in the old league, and he performed his feat against Boston. Rucker pitched the great pitcher, who pitched in the great games during the year, and Cy Young, of Boston, made his forty-second year notable by holding New York to no hits. Rhoades, of Cleveland, was equally stingy with Boston later on. Smith, of the Sox, let the White Sox win without a hit in nine innings, and Joss, of Cleveland, was the fourth and greatest of the list.

Joss Equals Young's Record. The elongated Nap twirler equalled the best pitcher's performance in not letting a White Sox batter reach first base in nine innings by hit, error, or any other method. Moreover, that feat was performed in a remarkable game five days before the season ended, and the two contending clubs were in a struggle to depend the chances of both Chicago and Cleveland for the pennant. Opposed to Joss at that game was Walsh, of Chicago, who struck out fifteen men, yet lost by a score of 1 to 0 in a passed ball.

The American League had 151 shut-out games during the season. There were sixty-three extra-inning battles, of which the longest lasted sixteen innings, and there were three games in which a pitcher did not throw his opponent a hit. Witte, of the Giants, performed this feat against Philadelphia, and made a new mark by doing it in a ten-inning battle.

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DEATH'S HARVEST IN SPORT WORLD

Many Well-Known Athletes Went to Last Rest During 1908.

Death reaped an unusually large harvest in the athletic world during 1908, and hardly a branch of sport but mourns the loss of many well-known leaders. Several famous names have been taken from the ranks of the auto racing, aquatic and the turf have lost several whose names have always been prominent. Some of those best known to have passed away were: Henry Chadwick, the "father of baseball"; A. J. Bushong, the veteran catcher; Edward Hanlan, ex-champion oarsman; George Siler, boxing referee; George Dixon, the former featherweight champion; John B. Taylor, Foxhall's famous mile and a half runner; Frank Bower, member Board of Review of the National Trotting Association; Cedric, the auto racer, and many others whose names are connected with various branches of sport for years.

The death roll of the year chronologically arranged, is as follows: January 4—At Toronto, B. Hanlan, ex-champion oarsman of the world, 53. January 6—At New York, George Dixon, former champion pugilist. January 7—At Pittsburgh, J. P. O'Neill, ex-owner Pittsburgh Ball Club, 64. January 11—At San Francisco, Henry M. Kriss, baseball player, 41. January 17—At New York, W. A. Blane, former hockey player, 40. January 22—At Amesbury, L. I., J. F. Ullman, famous bookmaker, 51. January 23—At Newark, N. J., J. McLean, former quail champion, 78. January 24—At New York, John Hammond, court tennis professional, 29.

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